

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Reasons for Initial and Continued Enrollment in Private Piano Lessons as Self-Reported by Children in Northern Indiana and Northern Ohio

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the reasons children identify for initially enrolling and for continuing to enroll in piano lessons. Several factors were examined to assess their effect on the reasons for enrollment; these factors were gender, age, who initiated enrollment, and length of enrollment in piano lessons. Study participants included 71 children currently enrolled in private piano lessons in Northern Indiana and Northern Ohio. While previous research has focused on the reasons adults enroll in piano lessons, this study focused on children under the age of 18. The participants each completed the Reasons for Enrollment in Piano Lessons Survey. The survey listed various reasons for enrollment, for which the children rated their level of agreement based on a five-point Likert scale. Results indicated that the most agreed upon reason children initially enrolled in piano lessons was they thought it would be fun, and they continue enrollment in piano lessons because it is fun. In addition, the children also stayed enrolled in piano lessons because they wanted to become better pianists, they wanted to become better musicians, and they enjoy learning new music. An important implication for piano teachers is to consider the interests of students when selecting repertoire and provide ample playing opportunities during the lesson time in an effort to increase the amount of enjoyment for

the students. In addition, teachers could take advantage of the increasing desire for improvement by challenging older students with more difficult and diverse repertoire, higher overall lesson preparation expectations, and new activities that address the student's weaknesses. Suggestions for future research include utilizing a larger population, examining the effect of socio-economic status on children's reasons for enrollment, surveying children in group lessons, and investigating what children think makes a lesson fun.